

Chair Clemens and Members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Zoe Absey and I am here today in strong support of House Bill 1106, which allocates \$2 million for transportation grants across North Dakota. Transportation is one of the biggest barriers preventing our neighbors from accessing their most basic needs, and this investment is critical for the well-being of communities across our state.

During my time at the Great Plains Food Bank, I saw firsthand how transportation challenges impact access to food, particularly in rural communities. Many individuals rely on friends, carpooling, or the very limited transportation options available just to get groceries, attend medical appointments, or go to work. Without reliable transportation, too many North Dakotans are left struggling to meet their daily needs.

Expanding transportation options will strengthen our communities, improve economic stability, and promote health and well-being by ensuring that more people can access essential services. This funding is a step toward making transportation more accessible and equitable, allowing local communities to build solutions that work for their residents.

I urge you to support HB 1106 and invest in a stronger, more connected North Dakota. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoe Absey